



**Doing  
the  
Most  
Good**

# The Salvation Army-Family Intervention Service The Independent Living Skills Program



## NA HO`OLA PONO



**“Moving Towards a Life of Righteousness”**

### Getting It Together at Hapuna Beach

The Dept. of Education had scheduled an Inter-session week where all students had a week's vacation from the 9th to the 11th of October. We knew that most of the youths that participate in the ILP do not go anywhere and are forced to stay at home. We decided to plan on the last day of the Inter-session week, an activity that would save our youth from boredom. On October 9, 2009, we took our youth to Hapuna Beach, located on the southwestern side of the Big Island. Deciding on an early start to secure a good beach spot, our day had started at 7 am in the morning. This was the first



ILP activity where we had merged most of our participants together from the participating ILSP high schools. For our returnees, it was a reunion and reconnecting with old friends. For the rest, it was a time to meet new faces and to develop new peer support for one another. The day started out slow, but upon

seeing the long stretch of white sandy beach and the beautiful blue ocean, they knew that fun would be the agenda for the day. Our intent was for our youth to see, support and unite with one another based on their commonality of being in foster care. At the end of the day, Uncle Kalani called out to everyone to “Circle Up”. The reason being, because their past were so disconnected and broken, our circle symbolized reconnection and a circle of wholeness. Each member a vital link to the whole. That's what ILP is. That's what contributes to the successes of our ILP program and hopefully towards the expected future successes of our youths.

### The Salvation Army-Family Intervention Services

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### Mission Statement

**“To provide youth with skills for a healthy life and to instill purpose, hope and vision to youth and their families.”**



The Salvation Army-Family Intervention Services

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Independent Living Program

The Salvation Army-Family Intervention Services

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### Geist Makes Nice

Since 2006, The Salvation Army-Family Intervention Services has administered The Foster Care Alumni Support Program for Transitioning Foster Youth and in 2008, the Holomua I Ka Lanakila Program, a work experience training program. Our services are delivered on the East Side of the Big Island and has,

up to date, provided valuable work experiences for over 100 former & current foster youth and transitioning foster youth. All of this would not be possible without the generous support of the Victoria and Bradley Geist Foundation. Victoria and Bradley Geist were single children who grew up in non-traditional families. They were quiet philanthropists. The Geist

Foundation was a direct result of their hard work and success in life. The Salvation Army-Family Intervention Services is grateful for the generous funding received which allows us to work diligently to enhance the quality of life for youth in foster care and to provide vital services for foster youth who are transitioning into adulthood successfully.



Here's our program director, Denise Pacheco and Cheryl Dias with Jeanne Hamilton, Geist Foundation.

## "Making Memories: Life Books"



On December 28, 2009, during the Winter Break, we had scheduled an



**ILP participants starting on their Life Books activity at Kalopa State Park.**

Independent Living Skills Program activity at Kalopa State Park. For this special, year ending activity, we decided on providing an activity where our youths would be able to work on "Life Books". These Life Books activities give our participants the opportunity to put together scrap books reflecting on the things that were and still are considered important to them. DHS-CWS sees projects like the Life Books activity, important to the youths we work with, especially in maintaining important connections with their pasts. With the successes achieved from the first Life Book activity almost a year ago, we've always had the intention of doing an-

other Life Book activity. Through the generous funds provided from the Friends of Children Justice Center-East Hawai'i, we added to the scrap book supplies accumulated by DHS-CWS and The Salvation Army-Family Intervention Services. The scrap book materials consisted of scrap book albums, stickers, stamps and special pages. There were pages that



**Everyone was really getting serious on their Life Book projects.**

had sport's themes, surfing, flowers and other Hawaiian themes. Our programs have spent over \$50 per person that participated in this awesome activity. Youths stated that this activity was great as it gave them the chance to reconnect with the times that brought us joy and good memories. It was time well spent bonding with friends by sharing stories and

pictures that were special to us. This activity brought a lot of us closer



**There was a decent amount of scrap book supplies available for students.**

together. This was a special activity knowing that one day, our children may be asking us one day how life was for us when we were teens and we would be able to take and dust off our albums from the old book shelf and share with them from our Life Books that were made this very day.



**ILP, youths and Life Books**

## Good Citizenship: Making Positive Differences

Every year before the Thanksgiving season we stress to our young people that no matter what bad situation they find themselves, there are always other people and families who are struggling with life even harder than they are. On Veteran's Day November 11, 2009, a



**ILP youth giving up their day off from school to make positive differences.**



lot of the youth that are participating in the ILP program gave up a day to make positive contributions in their community. Over 20 people volunteered on this community service project. At the Salvation Army Chapel in Hilo, the ILP students performed various tasks and worked really hard. Our

youths divided into groups and accomplished all the work that desperately needed attention at this site. Some of the youth worked on doing all the table setting preparation for the annual Thanksgiving Luncheon that Salvation Army sponsors for homeless people and needy families. Last year's Thanksgiving Luncheon fed almost 700 people. Due to the economic downturn, Salvation Army is expecting a larger number of people this year. Some of the ILP (continue page 6)





## World of Work Event: "Clarifying the Path Towards College"



Some of our youth that attended ILP's World of Work activity at Hawaii Community College

On October 16, 2009, we had scheduled our annual World of Work activity. ILP has scheduled the World of Work activity to coincide with the Big Island's Teachers Institute Day, a non-instructional day for students. We found that scheduling the WOW activity while students had a day off from their respective high schools, also provided us with a perfect opportunity for them to see the college in full operation. We started the day driving out to Pahoa high school to pick up some of the participants in the lower Puna area, then made another stop at Kea`au Shipman Park, where most of our youths waited to begin the day. Most of them complained of having to wake up early on a day when there was no school, while the rest complained that today was a such a nice day to go to the beach instead. Having students taking the time to attend this event instead of sleeping in late or planning another beach day, validates how serious they were about choosing college as their post-high option. Once we pointed that out to those that attended, they stopped complaining and made the best of the opportunity and resources made available to them. We had designed this activity specifically for the 11th and 12th graders who are participating in our programs, to better prepare them towards securing college as their post-high options.

The process of securing college as a post-high option can be quite intimidating for those that have aspiration of earning a college degree. There were times we've seen students with their parents frustrated and giving up during the admission and financial aid processes. Since 8 out of 10 students that graduates from our ILP program chooses to attend college, this activity plays a vital role in making that college dream becoming a reality. Due to our ever strengthening partnership with the Hawaii Community College, the Student Services Dept. were able to send representatives from the Financial Aid Office, Admission, Counselors & Advising Centers, Testing and Career Center, providing valuable information on what students need to do and prepare for if they are contemplating college as their post-high options. Each presenter not only gave our participants valuable information about why college should be their post-high choice after graduating from high school, but because we are in an economic downturn, college attendance has increased sharply as the job market has slowed down. Creating for greater competition for financial aid and admissions, not only for the University of Hawai`i at Hilo and Hawai`i Community College, but all higher education institutions statewide. This activity gives our youths definite advantages over other students, lessening competition. Each Student Services Department

gave important information that provided those that attended the upper hand in planning their first steps towards college. They received valuable information that would help them in the Admission, Financial Aid, Testing and Counseling areas. All of our youths that anticipate graduating this year, completed an admission form and the Admission's Specialist col-



After lunch, we took our participants to tour the physical sites of some of the offices of the Hawaii Community College's Student Services.

lected all completed admission forms. During lunch, we had college students that represented both The Student Life Council, who produces student activities like dances and music events and a representative from Student Government doing a presentation on, "Student Life Outside the Classroom". They played a game using balloons emphasizing student priorities and the obstacles that interferes with those priorities. The activity was both fun and crazy. After the lunch time presentations, the youths were given a tour of some of the student services sites such as, Admissions, Financial Aid and the Testing Center to better familiarize themselves with these vital resources and the instrumental role they will play towards making their college goals becoming a reality. Not only does the ILP program annually look forward towards this awesome event and the evident benefits our youths receive, but the college is also appreciative because it better prepares our youth towards their college goals which makes it easier for the college.



Some of our ILP participants eating lunch and meeting new friends with Uncle Glenn

## It's a Wrap: Toys 4 Tots



ILP youths showing how to wrap it up.



These youths know the positive differences they are making for others in the foster care system.

On the 14th and 15th of December 2009, we held our annual Toys 4 Tots Christmas Wrap for the Department of Human Services-Child Welfare Services. This will be the fourth year that the Independent Living Skills Program has volunteered to be part of this awesome event. Every year the Toys 4 Tots Drive donates Christmas gifts for needy children and families. A lot of the Christmas gifts that were donated to the Child Welfare Services are given out to toddlers and young children that were placed in the foster care system. And every year, the DHS social workers are responsible to wrap these gifts coupled with their already hectic schedules and timelines, it just made perfect sense that the ILSP volunteer to help wrap these donated gifts. Another good reason that contributed to the ILSP volunteering to do the Toys 4 Tots Christmas Wrap was that the majority of our youth had harbored some negative feelings towards the DHS-CWS offices and for some, their social workers. The ILP program thoughts were, if holding an activity at the DHS-CWS units that were based on performing positive deeds and we place our youths in a position where they could make positive differences, we would be better able to dispel some of the negativism that some of the foster youths we work with felt about DHS and their social workers.

It is our belief, besides doing an activity that had a worthy cause, it was always good when both social workers and the ILP youths exhibited the early Christmas spirit and passed around contagious smiles. Everyone in the DHS-CWS offices, from the aides to social workers reinforced the positive differences these youth were making. Every year I hear at least one youth confidently telling their social worker, "See, I can do something good too." These kinds of activities and interactions can only accommodate for a more effective partnership between the social workers and the youths they serve. With the ongoing recession, furlough days designated by the state workers and those who were unfortunately laid off, keeping up with the Christmas spirit has had it's challenges in the state offices. At least for the two days that the Independent Living Program performed their service to the community with the Toys 4 Tots Christmas Gift Wrap, we were able to bring a badly needed Christmas spirits into the state offices of DHS-CWS. Our youth knew that they were there to make a positive difference for the toddlers they were wrapping gifts



Knowing you can make a difference, makes a difference

for, but not realizing they also were lifting the spirits of the state workers that were working in the offices as well. It proves that there is a little Santa Claus in each of us. Each day of the Christmas Wrap, we gathered the youths and instructed them on how to mark and wrap each present. They each needed to jot down on a "post it", if the gift was for a girl or a boy and to list the appropriate age for each present. Of course, what student couldn't resist playing with some of the toys they were expected to wrap. A lot of the ILP youths had little gift wrapping experience, but by the end of the activity, a lot of our youth were quite accomplished at gift wrapping. It was also great seeing those youths that had participated in the Toys 4 Tots Christmas Gift Wrapping activity for several years and seeing how their gift wrapping skills had improved over the years.

In our Independent Living Skills Program, we discussed in the previous group meetings how the Christmas season affected each of us. For many, it's a special time of the year usually spent with family, so though

**"Being away from family at Christmas time can be a trying time for youth in foster care."**



## Toys 4 Tots

it's a joyful holiday season, for many in our group it was also a difficult time having to cope without family. This activity gave our youths an extra incentive knowing that there were young toddlers spending their Christmas away from family, feeling at a lost and yet knowing that a gift wrapped by them would make a special difference for them by brightening their day. We asked our participants, why are activities like this important to do? One student said, "It's good when we get opportunities like this to help others. It makes me feel good knowing my efforts will make another foster youth happier." Another youth wrote, "Knowing you can make a positive difference in another person's life, even someone you don't know, gives you the confidence you need to make a positive difference in our own lives." We also asked our volunteers, if doing this activity will make a difference for little kids placed in foster care? One youth said, "Having being presented with a gift makes it special during a time that's not so special." Another wrote, "These kids are sad, I know because I am always sad at Christmas, but every bit helps in bringing back that lost smile and happiness." We also asked our students, if they had the chance



**Multi-tasking, wrapping Christmas gifts and gossiping at the same time. Too good.**

to write something for the child that will be opening the gift you just wrapped, what would you say to that child to encourage and not discourage? The majority of youth that answered this question simply said to hang in there, know that someone cares for you and love you. One youth said, "I would tell them that I know how they feel and you don't need to feel you are alone, because you are not. I would leave them my number to call if they need someone to talk to and we could help each other get over our losses during the holiday."

We asked, how did this activity make you feel knowing that you are making a positive difference? "It makes me feel good knowing that there are others out there that are thinking of me too." Another youth said, "In doing this activity, every present that I wrapped, I could imagine the smiles and excitement that I brought to a young child going through a difficult time." One girl stated, "I always create or am around other people with drama. It's always a good thing to not be surrounded by drama and knowing that I can do good things that will have a positive impact on others. For today, I am not a drama queen." And that's a big accomplishment for this young lady. Of course, every year we

serve our volunteers pizzas and sodas, but I'd like to believe this is not the main reason they volunteer every year. I've witness every year since we started this community service project, what this event truly means. It's not only about wrapping gifts for the less fortunate or trying to bridge that vital gap that exist between our youth and DHS-CWS, but it's about making positive differences through a most trying time for youth in foster care. It's about empowering youth who oftentimes feels powerless in a situation they feel they have no control over. It's about giving our youth the ability to care again for someone other than themselves, which in turn helps them to not become so careless to others and especially, themselves. Activities such as this replaces their frustrations with a new found confidence and awareness that they can do something good and positive. Events like this proves that even young people in foster care can have a

**"It's great to know that activities like this helps us to realize that we can make a positive difference for others"**



**Very Merry Christmas.**



**Doing the most good at DHS-CWS Pahoa Unit. No present too hard to wrap.**



**Our volunteers felt that they needed to test out some of the toys they had to wrap. Child in us never leaves.**

**The Salvation Army-Family  
Intervention Services  
Na Ho`ola Pono**

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**Mission Statement**

"To provide youth with skills for a healthy life and to instill purpose, hope and vision to youth and their families"

**Future ILP Newsletter**

- FAFSA Workshop
- Spring Break : Da Journey
- University of Hawaii at Hilo  
Student Housing Tours
- Special ILSP Activities

## Ohana I Luna



One of our past ILP activities at Hapuna.

During our past ILP program activities, we always huddle our youth together by shouting out the command, "Circle Up". At a recent ILP activity to Hapuna Beach Park, again we commanded all our participants to, "Circle Up". It was explained to them at the time, when we ask them to "circle up", it symbolizes not only the disconnections and weak links they had all

experienced from their past, but it also symbolized the commonality we all share with one another as youth that were placed in foster care. Currently, though we are without family, we can still embrace one another as temporary families. Our expected connection to one another symbolizes the support and commitment we need to show for each other in securing our future dreams and aspirations against all odds. At our last ILP activity at Kalopa State Park, we again gathered our participants together and instructed them to once again, "circle up", but this time though the symbol was the same, we would change "circle up" to "ohana I luna", which means, "family up". I believe all that we teach, all that we emphasize, all that we share has greater emphasis on functioning as a family, keeping that vital connections and providing one another with that essential support and caring we all need towards securing greater future successes.

**"Ohana I Luna"**

### Good Citizens (continued from page 2)

boys volunteered to use the chapel's pressure washer and cleaned the chapel's sidewalk areas. One of the youth stated that he had passed the chapel before and seen homeless people sleeping on the very sidewalks they were cleaning. That made him feel that the task he performed had a greater purpose than just cleaning the sidewalks. The rest of the ILP

youths were busy cleaning out an outside storage shed and working together, they moved the shed to a more convenient spot for the chapel workers. The staff from the church had smiles from ear to ear upon seeing how the ILP not only moved everything, but how better organized all tools and materials were restacked in the moved, storage shed. The ILP gang even fixed the tarped garage used to park the chapel work vehicles. They moved the parking area and heightened the tarps so that the vans could be parked easily under the makeshift garage. All in all, the ILP youths did a good job. After all the listed tasks were completed, the Salvation Army staff fed our young volunteers lunch, everyone relaxed and reflected on all the good work that was performed for the day. Before taking our youths to the beach, we had processed with them the day's events. Usually they complain how



Some of the ILP youths having lunch and finally finding some time to relax.



ILP girls doing the preparation work for the S.A. Thanksgiving Luncheon

powerless they feel and how hopeless things can be, but today it was unanimous on how empowering the experience were for them. It also impacted them to see other people that were even less fortunate than they were and it became reminders for them that they could, not only make positive differences for others, but they realized that they could make positive differences for themselves as well. Thanks for the good work gang!!!